

By George Bennett

WEST PALM BEACH — U.S. Rep. Allen West, R-Plantation, pumped \$3.969-a-gallon gas at a Chevron station this afternoon and said more domestic energy production, including more drilling in the Gulf of Mexico, would eventually bring down prices.

Noting that the price of gas has more than doubled since President Obama took office, West said the administration isn't doing enough to lease areas for drilling offshore and on land.

The average retail price for a gallon of regular gas was \$1.78 in January 2009, according to the U.S. Department of Energy, which says the average price this week is \$3.96.

Obama on Saturday called for measures to increase drilling for oil and natural gas, but West said he's skeptical.

"The president needs to be more proactive than reactive. Actions speak louder than words," West said in an afternoon news conference at the Chevron station at South Dixie Highway and Belvedere Road.

"We should be drilling, we should be going after natural gas, we should be going after the coal, the nuclear, hydrogen power. We should be going after the wind, the solar, the biofuels -- everything that we have possible here in the United States of America," West told reporters.

Asked about drilling off the coast of Florida, West said, "we need to open it up and we need to make sure that we have all the right control measures in place that we can have it done safely. And also we need to make sure that Florida is part of the revenue sharing that comes off of

this."

Last year's Deepwater Horizon oil spill has made many Floridians leery of offshore drilling.

"The thing that we need to do is make the corrective measures from what we have learned and gleaned from the Deepwater Horizon incident, make sure that we apply those," West said.

While the policy he advocates might not have an immediate effect on pump prices, West compared it to turning around an aircraft carrier, saying, "The most important thing we can do is start that motion."

<http://www.palmbeachpost.com/news/u-s-rep-west-urges-drilling-to-tap-1479115.html>